

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01937 081552Z

42

ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PFOR, MILI, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET MEDIA HIGHLIGHT DEFENSE BUDGET FIGURES

VIENNA FOR USDEL MBFR

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

REF: MOSCOW 905

1. SOVIET MEDIA TREATMENT OF U.S. DEFENSE ISSUES IN RECENT DAYS HAS LARGELY SKIRTED ISSUES OF DEFENSE DOCTRINES AND STRATEGY, MUCH AS IT DID IN JANUARY (REFTEL). IT HAS DEVOTED MOST COVERAGE INSTEAD TO ROUTINE CARPING ABOUT BUDGET INCREASES AND OPPOSITION TO THEM IN U.S.

2. FOR EXAMPLE, REPORTING OF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S SENATE AND HOUSE TESTIMONY HAS SO FAR OMITTED ALL REFERENCE TO TARGETING

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01937 081552Z

DOCTRINE, ASSURED DESTRUCTION, AND RELATED QUESTIONS.

INFORMATION MADE PUBLIC IN U.S. CONCERNING SOVIET MILITARY PROGRAMS TO WHICH U.S. IS RESPONDING HAS BEEN DISMISSED WITH GENERALITIES ABOUT ALLEGED INCREASE IN SOVIET MILITARY THREAT. WHILE SEN. PROXMIRE'S APPEAL TO CURB GROWTH OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES WAS REPORTED (PRAVDA, FEB. 7), HIS PROPOSAL FOR GRADUATED MUTUAL REDUCTION OF LAND-BASED MISSILES HAS BEEN IGNORED. IN CONTRAST, SEN. MANSFIELD'S PROPOSAL FOR 5-10 BILLION DOLLAR CUT THROUGH REDUCTION OF FORCES STATIONED ABROAD WAS REPORTED IN PRAVDA FEB. 6, AS WERE STATEMENT OF DOUBT ABOUT APPROPRIATION REQUEST BY REP. GEORGE MAHON (RED STAR, FEB. 7).

3. SOVIET MEDIA HAVE CONCENTRATED ON STRAIGHT DOLLAR SUMS, WITHOUT INFORMING READERS OF SHRINKING DEFENSE SHARE OF TOTAL BUDGET OR EFFECTS OF INFLATION. THIS PRACTICE COLORED REPORTING BOTH OF PRESIDENT'S BUDGET MESSAGE AND OF SUBSEQUENT DEFENSE BUDGET PRESENTATIONS.

4. WHILE SHUNNING GENERAL DISCUSSION OF U.S. MILITARY DOCTRINE TO DATE, PRAVDA'S FEB. 4 INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY DID LASH OUT AT CONCEPT OF SMALL-YIELD NUCLEAR WARHEADS FOR MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST MILITARY TARGETS, DUBBING THIS A PROPOSAL (ATTRIBUTED TO GENERAL GOODPASTER) FOR NUCLEAR "MINI-WAR." PRAVDA INDIGNATION SEEMED ESPECIALLY DIRECTED TOWARD RATIONALE OF CAUSING LEAST DAMAGE TO CIVILIAN POPULATION, WHICH IT CLAIMED WAS PLOY TO EVADE BASIC PREMISE OF U.S.-SOVIET PNW AGREEMENT OF JUNE 1973 - NAMELY, RECOGNITION THAT NUCLEAR WAR WOULD HAVE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES FOR MANKIND.
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